



Two Eyes Cast Into Hell Fire

(Mat 18:8-9) Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. {9} And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.

In order to teach this section of verses, I must step you through a research session of sorts. I need to take you, step by step, and show you how I work the Word when dealing with a difficult subject.



Step One: Determine the context and audience:

The best way to determine the context is to back up a few (or many) verses until you are able to determine the true subject and context of what you are reading. In this case, we don't have to back up very far at all. As you know, one of Jesus' primary tasks was to introduce people to the kingdom of heaven.

I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. {4} Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

These opening verses establish the context. Jesus taught these folks how to live their lives if they wanted to enter and live in the kingdom of heaven.

Verse three told them that they needed to have the mindset of a child after they became converted. Without these two active dynamics in place, Jesus told them that they "shall not" enter therein. I must take a

(Mat 18:3-4) And said, Verily

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side step for a moment. Do you remember that entry into the kingdom of heaven was put on hold until a future time? That's right. Entry into it is not available at this time. Entry into God's family is available and it is accomplished when you become a Christian, but this is not entry into the kingdom of heaven or kingdom of God.

(Rom 10:9) That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

This is how you become a Christian. You confess Jesus as Lord and you believe that God raised Jesus from the dead. That's how you are saved.

All the church talk about kingdom of heaven and kingdom is God generally misleads the masses in

a major way. There should be no talk about such matters during our current age of grace.

Now, back to the subject we are dealing with. You understand that the subject AND audience are both far removed from Christianity and our age of grace. This means that you cannot apply these things as doctrine, plain and simple. Of course, you can try to apply them, but in the end, you will end up being confused. Why? Because they run at cross purposes to Christianity, a totally different way of life and believing.

Step Two: Study the surrounding verses to further your scope:

Often, Bible readers don't do this. It is important to read the verses surrounding your verse of interest in order to glean more contextual information.

In our case, we quickly learned the context and audience, and now we are learning more about humility.

(Mat 18:3-4) And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. {4} Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

Verse four introduced humility and greatness IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. Ask yourself, "can I enter therein?" The answer is a resounding "NO." Are you one of these Jewish listeners to whom Jesus spoke? The answer is a resounding "NO." But, is this a fantastic teaching, filled with the most amazing principles? Yes it is, but that doesn't mean that it was written to you. It was not.

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Jesus taught them how to enter into the kingdom of heaven, and he fully expected his Jewish audience to attend and apply. He taught them to be converted (from the Old Testament Law to the gospel of the kingdom of heaven), but they didn't attend and apply. God's chosen people rejected this kingdom teaching three times in total. Jesus taught humility. Did these people become humble? Not if what I understand from God's Word is right. And, it is very clear on this point, that the people rejected Jesus and his teachings on the kingdom. But now, we know the context and the audience, both of which don't apply to you. And we're learning about humility.

(Mat 18:5) And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.

Jesus didn't even know that the people would eventually reject

God's promised kingdom. He just kept on teaching. In verse five, he taught more on humility as a child. To receive one little child in the name of Jesus Christ was just like receiving Jesus Christ! Now, that's pretty awesome, isn't it?

Jesus continued his teaching on humility.

(Mat 18:6) But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

To offend one of these little ones is paramount to offending Jesus Christ. Then Jesus introduced the millstone. We don't use millstones anymore, but in the East, they did and still do. A millstone is approximately 18 inches across and five to six

inches deep with a hole in the center. Two of these stones were used together in order to grind grain. A wooden peg was put in the hole to hold the two stones together. Another wooden peg was in the side of the stone which was used to turn it. Grain was put into the hole and it was ground between the two stones and came out the sides.

In the East, capital punishment was either by hanging or by tying a millstone around the person's neck and casting him into the sea. Jesus Christ said that the millstone treatment would be better than to offend a small child. Grinding at a stone was a woman's job, and for a man to do it was totally humiliating. No man would ever be seen doing this except for some act of forced humiliation.

Samson was made to do this in order to humiliate him.

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(Judg 16:21) But the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison house.

The Philistines did everything they could do to humiliate Samson. This was one of the worst things they could have done to him - a mighty man now reduced to women's work. It was terrible.

(Mat 18:7) Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!

Verse seven is talking about the person committing the offense paying attention. He is the one who has the problem, "...but [or yet] woe to the man by means of whom the offence comes."

Then Jesus taught examples of what to pay attention to.

(Mat 18:8-9) Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. {9} And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.

Most of this makes sense, but a couple places need attention.

"Enter into life" in verse eight is actually talking about entering into the "resurrection life." Jesus taught that it would be better to live today maimed and enter into the kingdom of heaven that way

than not enter into it at all. He contrasted it to living a life of offence with all body members but being cast into everlasting fire. What do you think this did to those people? It certainly was designed to make them think about their daily choices. Apparently, they had a huge problem with making the wrong choices. Why else would Jesus teach something like this?

Step Three: Study parallel verses on the same subject:

This subject again comes up in Mark.

(Mark 9:42-48) And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea. {43} And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter

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into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: {44} Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. {45} And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: {46} Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. {47} And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: {48} Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

In order to understand this subject, you must apply what we have already learned about “hell.” In verse 43, the word “hell” is gehenna, meaning “city dump” where the fires burn

continually. The fire and the worms are always at work on the garbage.

I’d like to quote from the May 2012 Artios:

“(Isa 66:24) And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.

[This verse is talking about the gehenna.] The fires were continually burned here for the destruction of the refuse of Jerusalem. From this, it was supposed that it also referred to the judgment of God, but the Bible never really says that. Geenna occurs 19 times, and is always rendered “hell.” But it is always talking about this place of refuse.

In my opinion, to leap from the clear cut meaning of a burning trash dump into the arms of hell is just too much of a stretch. Jesus didn’t tell people that they were standing on the precipitous overhangs of hell itself, and to avoid it, they needed to dismember their body parts. Do you believe that he was? If you do, why haven’t you lost an eye, or an arm, or a hand, or your other parts? Because, surely you have committed at least one of the offenses listed in Matthew, chapter five.”

The gehenna was used as a burial place, especially for undeserving people. Jesus never called the city trash dump “hell.” The translators did. Jesus called it the city trash dump and cited exactly what happened there. For us to take a leap, as I said in the quote above, into “hell” is stubborn and without

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substantiation. Jesus taught the people to stop offending God by their actions and to start living according to the gospel of the kingdom of heaven. The laws of the land were applied to those who didn't, but above all, he wanted everyone to be able to enter into God's kingdom. Right choices were everything!

Step Four: Put it all together:

(Mat 18:8-9) Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. {9} And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell [gehenna – city dump] fire.

Now when you read our central verses of focus, what do you think they mean? Here's what I think:

In Matthew:

1. Jesus wanted people to accept the gospel of the kingdom of heaven and live according to it. He taught them to stop doing things that offended it and God.
2. Jesus told the people that it would be a better choice to enter into the kingdom of heaven maimed than to end up not maimed but cremated in the city dump because of wrong doings.
3. This was addressed to the Jews, not Christians.

In Mark:

1. Jesus taught that it would be better to enter into the resurrected live maimed, then to live this life in offense with all body members, and then end up whole in the city trash dump. He

taught this four times with four examples to make the point.

2. Everyone knew what the gehenna was, and that it was used, in part, for cremation of bodies which didn't necessarily deserve a proper burial. Now, we know what it is, too, and can change our theology to that of God's Word.

In conclusion:

Jesus never taught about a place called hell. We shouldn't either. This was addressed to the Jews, not Christians, and it doesn't apply to you at all.

Much love in Christ,

Jerry D. Brown